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Biblical Notes.

The Geography of Palestine. Rev. Geo. Adam Smith begins in the *Expositor* for February what promises to be a series of articles not only valuable, but what seldom is found, also interesting, on the "Historical Geography of the Holy Land." He remarks that what is wanted by the student of the Bible is not the common and easy task of taking one's readers along the track of one's own journey and labelling every scene, adventure or social custom with a text or story from Scripture. Rather he needs some idea of the main outlines of Palestine, its shape and disposition, plains, passes and mountains, etc., especially also to discern between the contribution of physical nature and the product of purely moral and spiritual forces in the religious development. Mr. Smith lays out the general features of Palestine in five parallel zones, imagining the observer in a ship off the coast. These zones are (1) The Coast and Maritime Plain; (2) The Shephelah or Low Hills; (3) The Central Range; (4) The Jordan Valley; (5) The Land East of Jordan. In addition to these, cutting right athwart them all, is the sixth feature of the land, the wide Plain of Esdraelon, or Megiddo. It would be well for the Bible student to bear this geographical division of the Holy Land in mind.

The Hebrews and the Sea. Mr. Smith has, in this first article on the "Coast and Maritime Plain of the Holy Land," some very striking remarks on the above topic. He calls attention to the fact that, from the mouth of the Nile to the high headland of Carmel, this coast is absolutely devoid of promontory or recess. No invader has ever disembarked an army on it till the country behind it was already in his power. A long line of foaming breakers meets the eye everywhere. How these geographical facts find their echo in the Old Testament history and literature! Throughout the Old Testament the sea spreads before us for spectacle, for symbol, for music, but never for use, save in one instance, that of Jonah. It was said, "Ye shall have the Great Sea for a barrier." Dan, at first, "remaining in ships" speedily retreated inland. Asher and Zebulun lie north of Carmel; and the word translated "haven" in connection with them means "beach." How different in this respect was Palestine from Greece. Their broken coast line invited the Greeks to roam. But from the high inland station the Hebrew saw his coast very different—a stiff, stormy line, down the whole length of which, as there was nothing to tempt men in, so there was nothing to tempt them out. Yet, Mr. Smith again adds, in the development of Israel's consciousness, she broke through her barriers and her eyes were lifted beyond that iron coast and she saw, through the prophet's eyes, the isles bring their riches from afar, the ships of Tarshish in the van. It was only when Cæsarea was established that that coast was broken through, and this port played a large part in the early progress of Christianity.

The Parable of the Talents. Two popular misconceptions obtain concerning the teaching of this parable, to which attention is called by the *Expository*